

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 3125

To amend the Public Health Service Act, the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and title XVIII of the Social Security Act to sustain access to vital emergency medical services in rural areas.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 27 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 22), 2000

Mr. CONRAD introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

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## A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act, the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and title XVIII of the Social Security Act to sustain access to vital emergency medical services in rural areas.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4       (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5       “Sustaining Access to Vital Emergency Medical Services  
6       Act of 2000”.

7       (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of  
8       this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.  
 Sec. 2. Rural emergency medical service training and equipment assistance program.  
 Sec. 3. Tax credit for volunteer emergency medical service providers.  
 Sec. 4. Study and report on the costs of rural ambulance services.  
 Sec. 5. Elimination of reduction in inflation adjustments for ambulance services.

1 **SEC. 2. RURAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE TRAINING**  
 2 **AND EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

3 Part E of title XII of the Public Health Service Act  
 4 (42 U.S.C. 300d–51 et seq.) is amended by adding at the  
 5 end the following new section:

6 **“SEC. 1253. RURAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE TRAIN-**  
 7 **ING AND EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

8 “(a) GRANTS.—The Secretary, acting through the  
 9 Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Ad-  
 10 ministration (referred to in this section as the ‘Secretary’)  
 11 shall award grants to eligible entities to enable such enti-  
 12 ties to provide for improved emergency medical services  
 13 in rural areas.

14 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant  
 15 under this section, an entity shall—

16 “(1) be—

17 “(A) a State emergency medical services  
 18 office;

19 “(B) a State department of Transpor-  
 20 tation;

21 “(C) a State emergency medical services  
 22 association;

1 “(D) a State office of rural health; or

2 “(E) any other entity determined appro-  
3 priate by the Secretary; and

4 “(2) prepare and submit to the Secretary an  
5 application at such time, in such manner, and con-  
6 taining such information as the Secretary may re-  
7 quire, that includes—

8 “(A) a description of the activities to be  
9 carried out under the grant; and

10 “(B) an assurance that the applicant will  
11 comply with the matching requirement of sub-  
12 section (d).

13 “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An entity shall use  
15 amounts received under a grant made under sub-  
16 section (a), either directly or through grants to  
17 emergency medical service squads that are located  
18 in, or that serve residents of, non-metropolitan sta-  
19 tistical areas, to—

20 “(A) hire or recruit emergency medical  
21 service personnel;

22 “(B) recruit or retain volunteer emergency  
23 medical service personnel;

24 “(C) train emergency medical service per-  
25 sonnel in emergency response, injury preven-

tion, safety awareness, and other topics relevant to the delivery of emergency medical services;

“(D) fund specific training to meet State certification requirements;

“(E) develop new ways to educate emergency health care providers through the use of technology-enhanced educational methods (such as distance learning);

“(F) acquire emergency medical services vehicles, including ambulances;

“(G) acquire emergency medical services equipment, including cardiac defibrillators;

“(H) acquire personal protective equipment for emergency medical services personnel as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; and

“(I) educate the public concerning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, injury prevention, safety awareness, illness prevention, and other related emergency preparedness topics.

“(2) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under this section the Secretary shall give preference to entities that intend to use amounts provided under the

1 grant to fund activities described in any of subpara-  
 2 graphs (A) through (E) of paragraph (1).

3 “(d) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The Director may  
 4 not make a grant under this section to an entity unless  
 5 the entity agrees that the entity will make available (di-  
 6 rectly or through contributions from other public or pri-  
 7 vate entities) non-Federal contributions toward the activi-  
 8 ties to be carried out under the grant in an amount equal  
 9 to 5 percent of the amount received under the grant.

10 “(e) EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.—In this sec-  
 11 tion, the term ‘emergency medical services’—

12 “(1) means resources used by a qualified public  
 13 or private nonprofit entity, or by any other entity  
 14 recognized as qualified by the State involved, to de-  
 15 liver medical care outside of a medical facility under  
 16 emergency conditions that occur—

17 “(A) as a result of the condition of the pa-  
 18 tient; or

19 “(B) as a result of a natural disaster or  
 20 similar situation; and

21 “(2) includes services delivered by an emer-  
 22 gency medical services provider (either compensated  
 23 or volunteer) or other provider recognized by the  
 24 State involved that is licensed or certified by the  
 25 State as an emergency medical technician, a para-

medic, a registered nurse, a physician assistant, or a physician that provides services similar to services provided by such an emergency medical services provider.

“(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001 through 2006.

“(2) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The Director may use not more than 10 percent of the amount appropriated under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year for the administrative expenses of carrying out this section.”.

**SEC. 3. TAX CREDIT FOR VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart A of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to nonrefundable personal credits) is amended by adding at the end the following:

**“SEC. 25B. VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE  
PROVIDER CREDIT.**

“(a) ALLOWANCE OF CREDIT.—In the case of an eligible volunteer emergency medical service provider, there shall be allowed as a credit against the tax imposed by this chapter for the taxable year an amount equal to \$500.

1       “(b) ELIGIBLE VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY MEDICAL  
2 SERVICE PROVIDER.—For purposes of this section—

3               “(1) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘eligible volunteer  
4 emergency medical service provider’ means an indi-  
5 vidual who—

6                       “(A) is an emergency medical service pro-  
7 vider or other provider (within the meaning of  
8 section 1253(e)(2) of the Public Health Service  
9 Act) providing emergency medical services in  
10 connection with an emergency medical service  
11 squad,

12                      “(B) volunteers with respect to such serv-  
13 ices, and

14                      “(C) is listed as active on the official staff  
15 roster of such squad for the taxable year.

16               “(2) EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.—For  
17 purposes of paragraph (1), the term ‘emergency  
18 medical services’ means—

19                      “(A) emergency medical services (as de-  
20 fined in section 1253(e)(1) of such Act), and

21                      “(B) any other services provided in rela-  
22 tion to such emergency medical services, such  
23 as administrative and operational duties and  
24 community education and training programs.

1           “(3) VOLUNTEER.—For purposes of paragraph  
 2           (1), the term ‘volunteer’ means to provide services  
 3           without compensation, other than reimbursement or  
 4           payment of reasonable and necessary expenses in-  
 5           curred in the performance of the emergency medical  
 6           service provider’s duty.”.

7           “(c) VERIFICATION.—The Secretary may require ad-  
 8           ditional information to be provided, in such form and such  
 9           manner as the Secretary deems necessary, to verify the  
 10          eligibility for the credit under this section.”.

11          (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-  
 12          tions for subpart A of part IV of subchapter A of chapter  
 13          1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by  
 14          inserting after the item relating to section 25A the fol-  
 15          lowing new item:

                  “Sec. 25B. Volunteer emergency services provider credit.”.

16          (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by  
 17          this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after  
 18          December 31, 2000.

19          **SEC. 4. STUDY AND REPORT ON THE COSTS OF RURAL AM-**  
 20                                   **BULANCE SERVICES.**

21          (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Health and Human  
 22          Services, in consultation with the Director of the Office  
 23          of Rural Health Policy and with the assistance of the Ad-  
 24          ministrators of the Health Care Financing Administration,  
 25          shall conduct a study of the means by which rural areas



1 with low population densities can be identified for the pur-  
2 pose of designating areas in which the cost of providing  
3 ambulance services would be expected to be higher than  
4 similar services provided in more heavily populated areas  
5 because of low usage. Such study shall also include—

6 (1) an examination of the cost differences be-  
7 tween independent volunteer ambulance providers  
8 and hospital-based ambulance providers serving  
9 rural areas; and

10 (2) an identification and analysis of the factors  
11 that contribute to the additional costs of providing  
12 ambulance services in areas designated under the  
13 previous sentence.

14 (b) REPORT.—Not later than June 30, 2001, the  
15 Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the results  
16 of the study conducted under this section, together with  
17 a proposed regulation based on that study which adjusts  
18 the fee schedule under section 1834(l) of the Social Secu-  
19 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(l)) with respect to payment  
20 rates for ambulance services provided in low density rural  
21 areas to take into account the increased cost of providing  
22 such services in such areas.

23 (c) IMPLEMENTATION OF REGULATION.—The regula-  
24 tion submitted under clause (ii) shall take effect not later  
25 than January 1, 2002.

1 **SEC. 5. ELIMINATION OF REDUCTION IN INFLATION AD-**  
2 **JUSTMENTS FOR AMBULANCE SERVICES.**

3 Subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 1834(l)(3) (42  
4 U.S.C. 1395m(l)(3)(A)) are each amended by striking “re-  
5 duced in the case of 2001 and 2002 by 1.0 percentage  
6 points” and inserting “increased in the case of 2001 by  
7 1.0 percentage point”.

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